

REMARKS

The Office Action dated March 23, 2006, has been received and carefully noted. The following remarks are submitted as a full and complete response thereto. Claims 1-6 are pending and respectfully submitted for reconsideration.

Interview

The Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for the interview granted on July 26, 2006. In the interview, claims 1-6, and the Ogino (JP 10-139401) and Wegeng et al. (U.S. Patent Publication No. 2006/0045842, "Wegeng") references were discussed. As a result of the interview, the Examiner indicated that further consideration would be given to the applicability of the Wegeng reference with respect to the rejection of claim 1.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1-3, 5 and 6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ogino in view of Wegeng. In making this rejection, the Office Action took the position that Ogino discloses many of the claimed elements of the invention with the exception of a second line, also comprising the elements of the first line so that a portion of the generated hydrogen stream is fed separately to one of the fuel cells (100). The Office Action took the position that providing a duplicate line from the reformer (30) of Ogino, which includes the purifying means, pressurization means, and storage means, to one of the fuel cells (100) would amount to a duplication of parts. The Office Action cited Wegeng for teaching splitting the gas generated in a reformer to various unit operations.

Claim 4 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ogino in view of Wegeng and applied to claim 3 above, and further in view of Fujitani et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,728,483, "Fujitani"). Ogino and Wegeng were cited for disclosing many of the claimed elements of the invention with the exception of the heat being a waste heat of the reforming means or a waste heat of the first fuel cell.

To the extent that the rejections remain applicable to the claims as currently pending, the Applicants traverse the rejection and respectfully submit that claims 1-6 recite subject matter that is neither disclosed nor suggested by the cited references.

Claim 1 recites in part:

...a first storage means for storing and supplying the hydrogen gas obtained by said reforming means to a first fuel cell used as a stationary electric power supply;

a first supply line supplying the hydrogen gas from the reforming means to the first storage means;

a second storage means for storing and supplying the hydrogen gas obtained by said reforming means to a second fuel cell used as a mobile electric power supply;

a second supply line supplying the hydrogen gas from the reforming means to the second storage means; and

a pressurization means, provided in the second supply line, for pressurizing the hydrogen gas to be stored by the second storage means,...(Emphasis added).

As a result of the claimed invention, two supply lines deliver hydrogen from a single hydrogen reformer to two different storage means. The first storage means then supplies the hydrogen gas stored therein to a first fuel cell. Similarly, the second storage means provides the hydrogen gas stored therein to a second fuel cell. The first and second fuel cells are independent.

The Applicants respectfully submit that Wegeng fails to cure the deficiencies in Ogino with respect to claim 1. As noted above, Wegeng was cited for teaching splitting the gas generated in a reformer to various unit operations. In contrast, Wegeng discloses multiple steam reformers 1, 2, 3 supplying multiple recuperators 1, 2, 3, respectively. See Fig. 1 of Wegeng. Therefore, Wegeng fails to cure the deficiencies in Ogino with respect to claim 1, as Wegeng does not disclose or suggest a single reforming means supplying a first and second storage means. As such, Ogino, alone, or in combination with Wegeng, fails to disclose or suggest at least the combination of features of a first storage means for storing and supplying the hydrogen gas obtained by said reforming means to a first fuel cell used as a stationary electric power supply; a first supply line supplying the hydrogen gas from the reforming means to the first storage means; a second storage means for storing and supplying the hydrogen gas obtained by said reforming means to a second fuel cell used as a mobile electric power supply; and a second supply line supplying the hydrogen gas from the reforming means to the second storage means, as recited in claim 1.

With respect to claim 4, the Applicants respectfully submit that the combination of Ogino, Wegeng and Fujitani fails to disclose or suggest the claimed features of the invention. Claim 4 depends from claim 1. As discussed above, Ogino and Wegeng do not disclose or suggest a single reforming means supplying a first and second storage means. Fujitani also does not disclose this feature of the invention. Therefore, Fujitani does not cure the deficiencies in Ogino and Wegeng with respect to claim 1. Accordingly, the cited references do not disclose or suggest the features of the invention as recited in dependent claim 4.

In view of the above, the Applicants respectfully submit that the Office Action has failed to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness for purposes of a rejection of claims 1 and 4 under 35 U.S.C. §103.

Conclusion

The Applicants submit that claim 1 is allowable. Claims 2-6 depend from claim 1 and incorporate the patentable aspects thereof. Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-6 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), allowance of claims 1-6 and the prompt issuance of a Notice of Allowability.

Should the Examiner believe anything further is desirable in order to place this application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

In the event this paper is not considered to be timely filed, the Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Any fees for such an extension, together with any additional fees that may be due with respect to this paper, may be charged to counsel's Deposit Account No. 01-2300, **referencing Attorney Dkt. No. 101175-00035.**

Respectfully submitted,



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Enclosure: Petition for Extension of Time (two months)